SINGLE AGAIN

A 10-Minute Urban Short Film

Genre: Urban Drama / Romance
Written by: Cedric "Cnote" Buard
Music: SINGLE AGAIN (Original Music Release)

SCENE 1 — THE END OF SOMETHING

SONG 1: "SINGLE AGAIN"
TIME: 0:00–1:05

INT. MARCUS'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

A modern apartment. Expensive furniture. Designer clothes. A television playing in the background.

But something feels empty.

MARCUS stands near the kitchen island while TASHA collects her belongings.

TASHA:
You know what's crazy? I don't even think you realize what you put me through.

MARCUS:
Here we go again.

TASHA:
Exactly. That's always your response. You never want to talk about anything.

MARCUS:
I work. I handle my business. I make sure everything is straight. What else do you want from me?

TASHA:
I wanted YOU, Marcus. Not just somebody who pays for dinner and shows up when it's convenient.

Marcus rolls his eyes.

MARCUS:
I don't have time for all this drama.

Tasha stops at the door.

TASHA:
One day you're going to realize that having somebody who genuinely loves you is worth more than all this stuff.

She walks out.

The door closes.

Silence.

Marcus stands there for a moment, then grabs his phone.

He opens his social media.

A notification appears from another woman.

He smiles slightly.

MARCUS:
(to himself)
Back to the regular scheduled program.

MUSIC BEGINS: "SINGLE AGAIN"

MONTAGE:

- Marcus pours himself a drink.
- He removes a framed picture of himself and Tasha.
- He throws it into a drawer rather than the trash.
- He scrolls through dating profiles.
- He lies across his king-sized bed, occupying only one side.
- The camera slowly pulls away, revealing how alone he really is.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: SINGLE AGAIN

SCENE 2 — NO EXPECTATIONS

SONG 2: "I AIN'T LOOKIN 4 NO LUV"
TIME: 1:05–2:00

INT. UPSCALE LOUNGE — NIGHT

Marcus is out with his boys.

Music, drinks, beautiful women, and conversation fill the room.

A woman approaches Marcus at the bar.

WOMAN:
You come here often?

MARCUS:
Often enough.

She smiles.

WOMAN:
So, are you single?

MARCUS:
Single, but not necessarily available.

She laughs.

WOMAN:
What's that supposed to mean?

MARCUS:
It means I'm just enjoying life right now. No complications.

She gives him her number.

Marcus takes it.

His friend DEVON notices.

DEVON:
Man, I thought you said you weren't looking for nobody.

MARCUS:
I'm not. But that don't mean I'm blind.

They laugh.

MUSIC BEGINS: "I AIN'T LOOKIN 4 NO LUV"

MONTAGE:

- Marcus exchanging numbers with women.
- A woman dancing with him.
- Another woman sending him late-night messages.
- Marcus leaving a woman's apartment early in the morning.
- Multiple unanswered text messages on his phone.
- He sits in his car scrolling through his contacts.

He receives a message:

UNKNOWN WOMAN:
"So when am I going to see you again?"

He reads it, locks his phone, and drives away.

He enjoys the attention but has no intention of investing in anyone.

SCENE 3 — SOMETHING DIFFERENT

SONG 3: "DANCE WITH ME"
TIME: 2:00–3:00

INT. LOUNGE — NIGHT

Marcus enters another lounge with Devon.

He notices NIA sitting with her girlfriends.

She catches him looking.

She smiles.

Marcus approaches.

MARCUS:
You look like you're having a good time.

NIA:
I was. What happened?

Marcus laughs.

MARCUS:
I see you got jokes.

NIA:
Only when somebody gives me a reason.

MARCUS:
Well, let me introduce myself before I give you another one.

They exchange names.

The chemistry is immediate.

A slow, sexy R&B song plays.

Marcus extends his hand.

MARCUS:
Dance with me.

NIA:
You don't even know me.

MARCUS:
That's what the dance is for.

She takes his hand.

MUSIC BEGINS: "DANCE WITH ME"

MONTAGE:

- Marcus and Nia dancing closely.
- Her laughing as he whispers something in her ear.
- A close-up of their hands touching.
- Their eyes meeting.
- Marcus walking her to her car.
- She gives him her number.
- He watches her drive away, smiling.

For the first time in a while, Marcus appears genuinely interested in someone.

His phone lights up.

NIA:
"Had a good time tonight. Hope you got home safe."

Marcus smiles and responds immediately.

SCENE 4 — THE DATING STAGE

SONG 4: "FEELIN U"
TIME: 3:00–4:00

INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS — DAY/NIGHT

A series of dates over several weeks.

MONTAGE:

- Marcus and Nia having dinner at a nice restaurant.
- Walking together through downtown Dallas.
- Nia sitting in the passenger seat of his car, laughing.
- Marcus taking pictures of her.
- A playful moment in a grocery store.
- Sharing dessert at a restaurant.
- Watching a movie on Marcus's couch.

Their chemistry is growing.

INT. MARCUS'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

Nia is lying on the couch while Marcus scrolls through his phone.

NIA:
You know, I like spending time with you.

MARCUS:
I like spending time with you too.

NIA:
So what exactly are we doing?

Marcus puts his phone down.

MARCUS:
Why we gotta put a label on everything?

Nia looks at him.

NIA:
I didn't say we had to. I just like knowing where I stand.

MARCUS:
Let's just enjoy what we have.

She smiles, but something about his answer bothers her.

MUSIC BEGINS: "FEELIN U"

The two share a kiss.

For now, she lets it go.

SCENE 5 — FALLING

SONG 5: "HERE I GO AGAIN"
TIME: 4:00–5:10

INT. MARCUS'S APARTMENT — MORNING

Sunlight comes through the blinds.

Nia is asleep beside Marcus.

He wakes up and looks at her.

He smiles.

He gently kisses her forehead.

MONTAGE:

- Marcus and Nia cooking breakfast together.
- Nia wearing one of his oversized T-shirts.
- Marcus introducing her to Devon.
- The two taking pictures together.
- Marcus surprising her with flowers.
- Nia leaving a toothbrush at his apartment.
- The two cuddling on the couch.
- Marcus holding her hand while driving.

For the first time, Marcus seems to be letting someone into his world.

INT. RESTAURANT — NIGHT

Nia and Marcus sit across from each other.

NIA:
I feel like we're getting closer.

MARCUS:
We are.

NIA:
So, are you seeing anybody else?

Marcus pauses.

MARCUS:
No.

NIA:
Good. Because I don't want to waste my time.

Marcus reaches across the table and takes her hand.

MARCUS:
You don't have to worry about that.

He looks sincere.

But his phone vibrates.

A message from another woman appears on the screen.

"Hey stranger. Where you been?"

Marcus quickly turns the phone over.

Nia notices.

NIA:
Everything okay?

MARCUS:
Yeah. Just work.

He smiles and continues eating.

The camera holds on Nia for a moment. She isn't completely convinced.

SCENE 6 — DISTANCE

SONG 6: "WE DON'T TALK NO MORE"
TIME: 5:10–6:10

INT. MARCUS'S APARTMENT — EVENING

The relationship has changed.

Nia sits on the couch while Marcus plays on his phone.

NIA:
Can we talk?

MARCUS:
About what?

NIA:
Us.

MARCUS:
What about us?

NIA:
You barely call anymore. When I come over, you're always distracted. And every time I ask you what's wrong, you act like I'm bothering you.

MARCUS:
I've just been busy.

NIA:
You're always busy.

MARCUS:
So now I can't handle my responsibilities?

NIA:
That's not what I said.

MARCUS:
Then what are you saying?

Nia takes a breath.

NIA:
I'm saying I miss you. And you're sitting right here.

Marcus looks at his phone again.

MUSIC BEGINS: "WE DON'T TALK NO MORE"

MONTAGE:

- Nia calling Marcus. No answer.
- Marcus seeing her messages but not responding.
- Nia sitting alone at a restaurant waiting for him.
- Marcus out with his friends while Nia waits at home.
- Nia looking at old pictures of them.
- Marcus becoming increasingly irritated by her questions.
- Nia slowly withdrawing affection.

INT. NIA'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

NIA:
I can't keep trying to get somebody to love me the way I love them.

Marcus says nothing.

She looks away, disappointed.

The silence between them says more than either of them wants to admit.

SCENE 7 — THE TRUTH

SONG 7: "I KNEW"
TIME: 6:10–7:10

INT. MARCUS'S CAR — NIGHT

Marcus sits outside Nia's apartment.

He has been trying to reach her all evening.

He looks through his phone.

A message appears from a mutual acquaintance.

"Bro, I don't know if you know, but I saw Nia out with another dude last night."

Marcus stares at the screen.

Another message follows.

A photograph.

Nia is sitting closely with another man at a restaurant. His hand is on her waist.

Marcus's face changes.

MARCUS:
You gotta be kidding me.

INT. NIA'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

Marcus confronts Nia.

MARCUS:
Who is he?

NIA:
What?

Marcus shows her the picture.

She looks down.

Silence.

NIA:
Marcus, I was going to tell you.

MARCUS:
Tell me what? That you've been seeing somebody else?

NIA:
We haven't been right for a while.

MARCUS:
So that makes this okay?

NIA:
No. It doesn't. But you haven't been here either.

MARCUS:
I was working on us!

NIA:
Were you? Because I was the only one trying to save this relationship.

Marcus looks at her.

He wants to argue, but he knows there is some truth in what she said.

MUSIC BEGINS: "I KNEW"

Nia begins crying.

Marcus looks at her, hurt and disappointed.

He turns and walks out.

SCENE 8 — THE BREAKING POINT

SONG 8: "BREAKIN UP"
TIME: 7:10–8:30

INT. MARCUS'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

Nia comes over to collect her belongings.

The apartment feels familiar, but colder.

They sit across from each other.

NIA:
I really did care about you, Marcus.

MARCUS:
I cared about you too.

NIA:
Then why was it so hard to show me?

Marcus looks down.

MARCUS:
I don't know.

NIA:
You always say that.

A long silence.

MARCUS:
You could've just left. You didn't have to do what you did.

NIA:
You're right. I should've left before I let it get that far. But I got tired of feeling alone with somebody.

Marcus looks at her.

MARCUS:
I guess we both got what we wanted.

NIA:
What do you mean?

MARCUS:
You don't have to deal with me anymore. And I don't have to deal with anybody.

Nia shakes her head.

NIA:
That's the problem, Marcus. You think being alone is easier than figuring out how to be with somebody.

She picks up her bag.

NIA:
I hope one day you figure it out.

She walks toward the door.

Marcus doesn't stop her.

MUSIC BEGINS: "BREAKIN UP"

MONTAGE:

- Nia driving away.
- Marcus standing in the doorway.
- Her toothbrush being removed from the bathroom.
- Her clothes disappearing from his closet.
- Marcus deleting their pictures.
- A final look at their empty spot on the couch.

He closes the door.

This time, there is no smile.

SCENE 9 — GOODBYE

SONG 9: "GOODBYE"
TIME: 8:30–10:00

INT. MARCUS'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

The same apartment from the opening scene.

The same furniture.

The same lighting.

The same silence.

Marcus sits on the edge of his bed.

His phone lights up.

A dating app notification.

"Someone likes you!"

He stares at it.

Then opens his contacts.

He scrolls past Tasha.

Past Nia.

Past several other women.

He stops.

He opens Nia's conversation.

Their last exchange:

NIA:
"I really wanted this to work."

MARCUS:
"Me too."

Marcus starts typing.

"I miss you."

He pauses.

Deletes it.

Locks his phone.

He gets up and walks toward the kitchen.

He notices the framed picture of himself and Tasha still sitting inside the drawer.

He takes it out.

Looks at it.

Then puts it back.

He walks to the bathroom.

His reflection stares back at him.

For the first time, he seems to be looking at himself instead of looking for someone else to blame.

MARCUS (V.O.):
Funny how things always seem to end the same way.

He walks back into the bedroom.

MARCUS (V.O.):
Different faces. Different names. Different stories.

He sits on the bed.

MARCUS (V.O.):
But somehow, I always end up right back here.

He looks at the empty side of the bed.

MARCUS (V.O.):
Maybe it ain't that I can't find the right one.

A beat.

MARCUS (V.O.):
Maybe I just never figured out how to be the right one.

He looks at his phone.

The dating app notification is still there.

He considers opening it.

Instead, he puts the phone face down.

MARCUS (V.O.):
Single again.

FINAL SHOT:

The camera slowly pulls away from Marcus sitting alone in his bedroom.

The composition mirrors the opening shot of the film.

Same man.

Same room.

Same empty space.

FADE TO BLACK.

END

FINAL TITLE CARD:

"Sometimes the hardest relationship to fix is the one you have with yourself."

SINGLE AGAIN

Written and Directed by Cedric "Cnote" Buard